5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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539 crawled up by his side, unseen. In the still air, the Piegan heard the sharp twang of a bow string, but, before he could turn his head, the long, fine-pointed arrow pierced him through and through. The bow and arrows dropped from his hands, he swayed, and then fell forward on the grass, dead. But now the warriors came pouring from the camp to aid him. Too late! The Snakes quickly scalped their fallen enemy, scattered up the mountain, and were lost to sight.

Now Fox-eye had two wives, and their father and mother and all their near relations were dead. All Fox-eye's relatives, too, had long since gone to the Sand Hills.[1] So these poor widows had no one to avenge them, and they mourned deeply for the husband so suddenly taken from them. Through the long days they sat on a near hill and mourned, and their mourning was very sad.

There was a young warrior named Mik-a'pi. Every morning he was awakened by the crying of these poor widows, and through the day his heart was touched by their wailing. Even when he went to rest, their mournful cries reached him through the darkness, and he could not sleep. So he sent his mother to them. "Tell them," he said, "that I wish to speak to them." When they had entered, they sat close by the door-way, and covered their heads.

"*Kyi!*" said Mik-a'pi. "For days and nights I have heard your mourning, and I too have silently mourned. My heart has been very sad. Your husband was my near friend, and now he is dead and no relations are left to avenge him. So now, I say, I will take the load from your hearts. I will avenge him. I will go to war and take many scalps, and when I return, they shall be yours. You shall paint your faces black, and we will all rejoice that Fox-eye is avenged."

When the people heard that Mik-a'pi was going to war,

[775] [1] Sand Hills: the shadow land; place of ghosts; the Blackfoot future world.

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the seeker after power did not always, nor perhaps often, tell any one what he was going to do. 787 785

Three modes of burial were practised by the Blackfeet. They buried their dead on platforms placed in trees, on platforms in lodges, and on the ground in lodges. If a man dies in a lodge, it is never used again. The people would be afraid of the man's ghost. The lodge is often used to wrap the body in, or perhaps the man may be buried in it. 764 [768]

As soon as a person is dead, be it man, woman, or child, the body is immediately prepared for burial, by the nearest female relations. Until recently, the corpse was wrapped in a number of robes, then in a lodge covering, laced with rawhide ropes, and placed on a platform of lodge poles, arranged on the branches of some convenient tree. Some times the outer wrapping — the lodge covering — was omitted. If the deceased was a man, his weapons, and often his medicine, were buried with him. With women a few cooking utensils and implements for tanning robes were placed on the scaffolds. When a man was buried on a platform in a lodge, the platform was usually suspended from the lodge poles.

Sometimes, when a great chief or noted warrior died, his lodge would be moved some little distance from the camp, and set up in a patch of brush. It would be carefully pegged down all around, and stones piled on the edges to make it additionally firm. For still greater security, a rope fastened to the lodge poles, where they come together at the smoke hole, came down, and was securely tied to a peg in the ground in the centre of the lodge, where the fireplace would ordinarily be. Then the beds were made up all around the lodge, and on one of them was placed the corpse, lying as if asleep. The man's weapons, pipe, war clothing, and medicine were placed near him, and the door then closed. No one ever again entered such a lodge. Outside the lodge, a number of his horses, often twenty or more, were killed, so 766 768 [775]

766 that he might have plenty to ride on his journey to the
768 Sand Hills, and to use after arriving there. If a man had a
[775] favorite horse, he might order it to be killed at his grave, and his order was always carried out. In ancient times, it is said, dogs were killed at the grave.

765 Women mourn for deceased relations by cutting their hair
562 short. For the loss of a husband or son (but not a daughter), they not only cut their hair, but often take off one or more joints of their fingers, and always scarify the calves of their legs. Besides this, for a month or so, they daily repair to some place near camp, generally a hill or little rise of ground, and there cry and lament, calling the name of the deceased
[533] over and over again. This may be called a chant or song,
[152] for there is a certain tune to it. It is in a minor key and very doleful. Any one hearing it for the first time, even though wholly unacquainted with Indian customs, would at once know that it was a mourning song, or at least was the utterance of one in deep distress. There is no fixed period for the length of time one must mourn. Some keep up this daily lament for a few weeks only, and others much longer. I once came across an old wrinkled woman, who was crouched in the sage brush, crying and lamenting for some one, as if her heart would break. On inquiring if any one had lately died, I was told she was mourning for a son she had lost more than twenty years before.

Men mourn by cutting a little of their hair, going without leggings, and for the loss of a son, sometimes scarify their legs. This last, however, is never done for the loss of a wife, daughter, or any relative except a son.

551 Many Blackfeet change their names every season. When-
[553] ever a Blackfoot counts a new *coup*, he is entitled to a new name. A Blackfoot will never tell his name if he can avoid it. He believes that if he should speak his name, he would be unfortunate in all his undertakings.

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When they reached the water's edge, Old Man picked up from the ground a dry buffalo chip and a stone. "Now, woman," he said, "you will tell me which one of these to throw into the water. If what I throw floats, your child shall live; the people shall live forever. If it sinks, then your child shall die, and all the people shall die, each one when his time comes."

The woman stood still a long time, looking from the stone to the buffalo chip, and from the chip to the stone. At last she said, "Throw the stone." Then Old Man tossed it into the river, and it sank to the bottom. "Woman," he cried, "go home; your child is dead." Thus, on account of a foolish woman, we all must die.

The shadow of a person, the Blackfeet say, is his soul. Northeast of the Sweet Grass Hills, near the international boundary line, is a bleak, sandy country called the Sand Hills, and there all the shadows of the deceased good Blackfeet are congregated. The shadows of those who in this world led wicked lives are not allowed to go there. After death, these wicked persons take the shape of ghosts (*Sta-au'*[1]), and are compelled ever after to remain near the place where they died. Unhappy themselves, they envy those who are happy, and continually prowl about the lodges of the living, seeking to do them some injury. Sometimes they tap on the lodge skins and whistle down the smoke hole, but if the fire is burning within they will not enter.

Outside in the dark they do much harm, especially the ghosts of enemies who have been killed in battle. These sometimes shoot invisible arrows into persons, causing sickness and death. They have hit people on the head, causing them to become crazy. They have paralyzed people's limbs, and drawn their faces out of shape, and done much other harm.

[1] The human skeleton is also called *Sta-au'*, *i.e.* ghost. Compare Cheyenne *Mis-tai'*, ghost.

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775 Ghosts walk above the ground, not on it. An example of this peculiarity is seen in the case of the young man who visited the lodge of the starving family, in the story entitled Origin of the *I-kun-uh'-kah-tsi.*

[115] Ghosts sometimes speak to people. An instance of this is the following, which occurred to my friend Young Bear Chief, and which he related to me. He said: "I once went to war, and took my wife with me. I went to Buffalo Lip Butte, east of the Cypress Mountains; a little creek runs by it. I took eighteen horses from an Assinaboine camp one night, when it was very foggy. I found sixteen horses feeding on the hills, and went into the camp and cut loose two more. Then we went off with the horses. When we started, it was so foggy that I could not see the stars, and I did not know which way to run. I kept travelling in what I supposed was the direction toward home, but I did not know where I was going. After we had gone a long way, I stopped and got off my horse to fix my belt. My wife did not dismount, but sat there waiting for me to mount and ride on.

"I spoke to my wife, and said to her, 'We don't know which way to go.' A voice spoke up right behind me and said: 'It is well; you go ahead. You are going right.' When I heard the voice, the top of my head seemed to lift up and felt as if a lot of needles were sticking into it. My wife, who was right in front of me, was so frightened that she fainted and fell off her horse, and it was a long time before she came to. When she got so she could ride, we went on, and when morning came I found that we were going straight, and were on the west side of the West Butte of the Sweet Grass Hills. We got home all right. This must have been a ghost."

Now and then among the Blackfeet, we find evidences of a belief that the soul of a dead person may take up its abode in the body of an animal. An example of this is

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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seen in the story of E-kūs'-kini, p. 90. Owls are thought to be the ghosts of medicine men. [775] [825]

The Blackfeet do not consider the Sand Hills a happy hunting ground. There the dead, who are themselves shadows, live in shadow lodges, hunt shadow buffalo, go to war against shadow enemies, and in every way lead an existence which is but a mimicry of this life. In this respect the Blackfeet are almost alone. I know of scarcely any other American tribe, certainly none east of the Rocky Mountains, who are wholly without a belief in a happy future state. The Blackfeet do not especially say that this future life is an unhappy one, but, from the way in which they speak of it, it is clear that for them it promises nothing desirable. It is a monotonous, never ending, and altogether unsatisfying existence, — a life as barren and desolate as the country which the ghosts inhabit. These people are as much attached to life as we are. Notwithstanding the unhappy days which have befallen them of late years, — days of privation and hunger, — they cling to life. Yet they seem to have no fear of death. When their time comes, they accept their fate without a murmur, and tranquilly, quietly pass away. [171] [157] [761]

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'Listen, Sun, pity us! Listen, Old Man, pity us! Above People, pity us! Under Water People, pity us! Listen, Sun! Listen, Sun! Let us survive, pity us! Let us survive. Look down on our sick daughter this day. Pity her and give her a complete life.' At the conclusion of this short prayer, all the people uttered a loud *m-m-m-h*, signifying that they took the words to their hearts. Every one now commenced the pipe song, and the medicine woman passed the stem over different parts of the sick woman's body, after which she rose and left the lodge.

"The medicine man now took a common pipe which had been lighted, and blew four whiffs of smoke toward the sky, four toward the ground, and four on the medicine pipe stem, and prayed to the Sun, Old Man, and all medicine animals, to pity the people and give them long life. The drums were then produced, the war song commenced, and the old man, with a rattle in each hand, danced four times to the door-way and back. He stooped slightly, kept all his limbs very rigid, extending his arms like one giving a benediction, and danced in time to the drumming and singing with quick, sudden steps. This is the medicine pipe dance, which no one but a pipe-owner is allowed to perform. Afterward, he picked up the pipe stem, and, holding it aloft in front of him, went through the same performance. At the conclusion of the dance, the pipe stem was passed from one to another of the guests, and each one in turn held it aloft and repeated a short prayer. The man on my right prayed for the health of his children, the one on my left for success in a proposed war expedition. This concluded the ceremony."

Disease among the Blackfeet is supposed to be caused by evil spirits, usually the spirits or ghosts of enemies slain in battle. These spirits are said to wander about at night, and whenever opportunity offers, they shoot invisible arrows into persons. These cause various internal troubles, such as

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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753 consumption, hemorrhages, and diseases of the digestive
[775] organs. Mice, frogs, snakes, and tailed batrachians are said
[825] to cause much disease among women, and hence should be shunned, and on no account handled.

752 Less important external ailments and hurts, such as ulcers,
757 boils, sprains, and so on, are treated by applying various lotions or poultices, compounded by boiling or macerating certain roots or herbs, known only to the person supplying them. Rheumatic pains are treated in several ways. Sometimes the sweat lodge is used, or hot rocks are applied over the place where the pain is most severe, or actual cautery is practised, by inserting prickly pear thorns in the flesh, and setting fire to them, when they burn to the very point.

755 The sweat lodge, so often referred to, is used as a
757 curative agent, as well as in religious ceremonies, and is
343 considered very beneficial in illness of all kinds. The
354 sweat lodge is built in the shape of a rough hemisphere, three or four feet high and six or eight in diameter. The frame is usually of willow branches, and is covered with cowskins and robes. In the centre of the floor, a small hole is dug out, in which are to be placed red hot stones. Everything being ready, those who are to take the sweat remove their clothing and crowd into the lodge. The hot rocks are then handed in from the fire outside, and the cowskins pulled down to the ground to exclude any cold air.
[782] If a medicine pipe man is not at hand, the oldest person
[887] present begins to pray to the Sun, and at the same time sprinkles water on the hot rocks, and a dense steam rises, making the perspiration fairly drip from the body. Occasionally, if the heat becomes too intense, the covering is
755 raised for a few minutes to admit a little air. The sweat
757 bath lasts for a long time, often an hour or more, during
[782] which many prayers are offered, religious songs chanted, and several pipes smoked to the Sun. As has been said, the
[772] sweat lodge is built to represent the Sun's own lodge or

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

pipe is the only recognizable ritual to which they referred. Thompson remarked upon the great length of these pipestems, some three or four feet long, and noted that they were carried on the backs of their owners with care when camp was moved. Henry learned of the Blackfoot tradition that the medicine pipe was given to the people by Thunder.

Alexander Henry was told that when a Blackfoot Indian died, his spirit traveled to a great hummock between Red Deer River and the South Saskatchewan. There it ascended into the air and proceeded southward "to a delightful country, well stocked with horses, buffalo, and women and there lives happy to all eternity, making pounds, chasing buffalo, and enjoying handsome women."[45]

Henry regarded the Blackfoot tribes as "the most independent and happy people of all the tribes E. of the Rocky mountains. War, women, horses and buffalo are their delights, and all these they have at command."[46]

Strong and warlike as the Blackfoot tribes were, the traders had little to fear from them as long as they gave fair return for furs, horses, and provisions in such coveted wonders as guns and "white man's water." The Indians knew the traders were too few in number to offer a threat to their security. During the 1780's the Blackfoot tribes were uniformly friendly to the white businessmen in their country. In the early nineties, however, their Gros Ventre allies, living on the plains between the South Saskatchewan and the Missouri, twice destroyed Hudson's Bay Company posts. In 1811, believing the traders were discriminating against them, the Gros Ventres proposed an attack upon Rocky Mountain House. When the Piegans learned of this plan they nipped it in the bud by warning the Gros Ventres in no uncertain terms that if they carried out their threat against the traders, they would have to fight them too. The traders themselves had roused the resentment of the Piegans by sending arms

[45] *Ibid.*, II, 527–29; Thompson, *Narrative*, 366.
[46] Henry and Thompson, *New Light*, II, 737.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 44]

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

with a gun. A close relative of the dead man pressed the gun against the horse's head and pulled the trigger. The bodies of the dead horses were left where they fell, but camp members were permitted to strip them of their valuable riding gear. The gear was of no more value to the deceased, for according to Blackfoot belief the spirit horse joined the spirit of its master wearing the trappings it bore at the moment of its death. The death lodge was left undisturbed. People of the dead man's camp feared to loot it lest his spirit return to haunt them.

Prominent chiefs sometimes expressed the desire to have their bodies taken to the fur posts when they died. It was then the responsibility of the fur company to bury them. Maximilian witnessed a double burial of two relatives of Bear Chief by the traders at Fort McKenzie in the summer of 1833.

> The two Indians were laid in the same grave, wrapped in a red blanket and buffalo skin, over which was laid a piece of colored stuff, given by Mr. Mitchell [the chief trader]. The bottom and sides of the grave were lined with boards; the body, too was covered with wood; his bridle, whip, and some other trifles, were thrown in, and the grave filled with earth.[18]

A number of prominent Piegan chiefs who died in the fifties and sixties were taken to Fort Benton for burial.

Women prepared bodies for burial. The deceased were usually dressed in their best clothes, their faces were painted, and the bodies were sewn in buffalo robes and deposited in the forks of trees. Sometimes they were placed on the ground in a ravine or on the summit of a hill, then covered with rocks and dirt to keep the wolves from molesting them. It was customary to kill a man's favorite horse—his trusted companion on the buffalo hunt and war party—near his burial place. Poor families who could not afford to sacrifice the dead man's horse cut its mane and tail short and considered that the animal was in mourning for its master.

[18] *Travels*, II, 141.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

plained, "My parents had several children before I was born. All of them died. When I was a baby, my mother cut off this finger and gave it to the sun so that I might live and enjoy long life. That I have done."

In the medicine lodge at sun dance time each of the men's societies danced and presented gifts to the sun. The varied ceremonies in the medicine lodge usually consumed four or more days. The lodge itself was left standing when the great camp broke up and the several hunting bands went their separate ways for the fall hunt.

Like other peoples, the Blackfoot Indians employed simple home remedies for minor ailments, but when someone was seriously ill they called upon a man or woman who had magic powers with which to cure the sick. The Blackfeet believed disease was caused by an evil spirit entering a person's body and that it could be cured by a doctor who possessed the power to expell the spirit. As Blackfoot doctors received their detailed instructions for curing the sick in dreams, their methods differed. Many, however, employed singing, drumming, and calling upon their supernatural helper for assistance. Not uncommonly, the doctor appeared to extract some small object from the sick person's body as proof that the cause of illness had been removed. Some doctors were specialists in treating broken bones, snake bites, or battle wounds. Many of the most renowned doctors were women. It was customary to pay the doctor one or more horses for his services. The family of a victim of a prolonged illness might give all their possessions to the Indian doctor.

The Blackfoot Indians believed that after death the soul traveled to the Sand Hills, a desolate country south of the Saskatchewan River. There the deceased entered upon a new life similar to the one he or she had lived on earth. The dead were invisible to the living. Nevertheless, Indians who traveled through the lonely sand hill country claimed they heard strange noises and saw the trails and deserted camp circles of the dead. The Blackfeet claimed that the ghosts of the dead sometimes returned to communicate with the living in weird, whistling sounds.

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

They went after him and found he was Heavenly Colt. He was alive and in good condition. Heavenly Colt was returned to his rightful Blood owner. That horse had great secret power.

Like humans, horses were believed to survive death as spirits possessing the power to return and make their spirit presences known to the living. Weasel Tail illustrated his own strong belief in horse spirits by relating a personal experience.

About 50 years ago I visited the lodge of Steel, a Blood Indian. I knew Steel thought his father's spirit was near him at all times. I asked Steel, "Where is your father, Many Spotted Horses?" While I talked I heard a horse whinny far away. Then I heard a horse at the back of the lodge shaking and its stirrups rattling. Then I heard someone talking behind Steel. I could see no one there. It was Steel's father's spirit, come to visit him on his spirit horse."

BELIEFS REGARDING THE ORIGIN OF HORSES

The beliefs of the great majority of aged, fullblood Blackfoot Indians regarding the origin of horses are embodied in their mythology. In the course of my field work on the Blackfeet Reservation, Mont., elderly Piegan informants recited three different myths explaining the origin of horses. One was told by Short Face, recognized by his fellows as the most accomplished storyteller on the reservation, in the fall of 1943. In the summer of 1947, my interpreters, Reuben and Cecile Black Boy, said that during the intervening years Dog Child, a North Piegan, had told them another version of this myth.

Short Face's version, which I have given a title to, follows.

THUNDER'S GIFT OF HORSES

Many years ago, when people used dogs for moving camp, there lived a Piegan named Wise Man. He and his wife were a handsome couple, but they wore very plain buckskin clothes. One day Wise Man said to his wife, "I have been thinking about something. If my plans work out we shall have very fine clothes. Let's move away from here and make camp in the woods. I'll collect all the wood you need, but you must not break any of the sticks I bring in."

Wise Man and his wife moved to the woods. After he had brought in wood, he told his wife, "Now I shall go up the hill and catch some eagles." He ascended the hill, dug a pit, found a dead coyote and cut it open, placed a roof of sticks over the pit after he had climbed into it, and tied the coyote on the roof. When eagles saw the coyote they swooped down and began pecking at the carcass. Wise Man grabbed each eagle in turn as it ate, pulled it into the pit and wrung its neck. He caught eight eagles. Then he returned to camp and told his wife, "I shall make myself a bonnet from these feathers." He made his bonnet—

[71] Wilson (1924, pp. 144–145) reported Hidatsa belief that all horses had supernatural powers, and that if horses were not properly cared for they would not increase in numbers and might leave their negligent owners. A Hidatsa informant also claimed the Assiniboin considered their horses sacred and sang sacred songs to them (ibid., p. 142). Dorsey (1894, p. 499) mentioned the Dakota custom of praying to horses. The existence of their horse medicine cults is evidence of belief in the supernatural powers of horses among other Plains and Plateau tribes.

10: Lewis E-4 (no date) 1973 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

721 727 439 [195] "... none are spared but young girls, who are taken captive and sold to the Canadian traders...."[153]

As early as 1774, Cocking mentions the exchange of two young girl captives between the Blackfoot and the trading Indians (Cree), who acted as middlemen for the Hudson's Bay Company.[154] We have not been able to determine the extent of this trade, but our material suggests that it was of some importance.

195 727 [439] [464] [562] After 1830, women captives were no longer sold or traded. They were now valued by the Blackfoot as an additional labor supply to meet the new needs of tanning hides and preparing provisions for the enormous market provided by the fur trade. Here again, the old importance of women in terms of numbers was overshadowed by their new importance as aids in the acquisition of the new equipment (guns, amunition, etc.), that had become so necessary to Blackfoot life.

721 727 Loot as an objective of pre-horse war was restricted to weapons, leather armor, tools, and other small articles. These objects had usefulness but were of limited economic value, and in a sense fell into the category of war trophies.

Another motive for war was the desire for scalps and the prestige connected with scalp taking. Early in the eighteenth century an old Piegan chief tells us, "... we were fond of war, even our women flattered us to war, and nothing was thought of but scalps for dancing and singing."[155] [178] Warfare had little of the commercialism of later years, but was intimately tied up with religious motives which later almost completely disappeared.

An interesting aspect of this is found in Thompson, in Saukamappee's recounting of a theological discussion concerning questions of scalping and the use of the soul of a slain enemy. A successful war party had returned with over fifty scalps. A war tent was made where all the chiefs, warriors, and mourners, assembled.

195 721 727 539 775 "All those whose faces were blackened for the loss of relations or friends, now came forward to claim the scalps to be held in their hands for the benefit of their departed relations and friends; this occasioned a long conversation with those who had scalps; at length they came forward to the War Chief. Those who had taken the trophy from the head of an enemy they had killed, said the Souls of the enemy that each of us has slain belongs to us and we have given them to our relations in the other world to be their slaves, and we are contented. Those who had scalps taken from the enemy that were found dead under the shields were at a loss what to say, as not one could say he had actually slain the enemy whose scalp he held, and yet wanted to send their souls to be the slaves of their departed relations. This caused much discussion, and the old chiefs decided it could not be done; and that no one could send the soul of an

[153] Edward Umfreville, *The Present State of Hudson Bay*, pp. 177, 188.

[154] Cocking, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

[155] Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

10: Lewis E-4 (no date) 1973 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

enemy to be a slave in the other world except the warrior who had actually killed him; the scalps you hold are trophies of the Battle but they give you no right to the soul of the enemy from whom it was taken; he alone who kills an enemy has a right to the soul, and to give it to be a slave to whom he pleases. This decision did not please them, but they were obliged to abide by it."[156]

While this concept is to be found in almost identical form among the Winnebago,[157] the writer knows of no other Plains tribe for whom it was reported. From this it would appear that Blackfoot warfare contained some elements of Woodland ideology in the 1730's,[158] but the methods of fighting differed from the Woodland man to man style, and had become well adapted to the conditions of the Plains.[158a]

The large scale warfare that was described above demanded a good degree of centralized leadership and Thompson's account of Piegan chieftainship (1787) suggests that there was a clearly differentiated tribal war chief of more or less permanence, with authority limited to war matters and war periods.

"They (Piegan) have a civil and military Chief. The first was called Sakatow, or orator, and the office appeared hereditary in his family as his father had been the civil Chief, and his eldest son was to take his place at his death, and occasionally acted for him . . . , his insignia of office was the backs of two fine otterskins covered with mother of pearl, which from behind his neck hung down his breast to below the belt; When his son acted for him he always had this ornament on him. In every council he presided except one of war. He had couriers which went from camp to camp and brought news . . . of where the great bison herds were feeding, and of the direction they were taking."

"The War Chief confined himself to war matters and the care of the camp of which he was, which was generally of fifty to one hundred tents, generally a full day's march nearer to the Snake Indians than any other camp. It was supposed he looked on the Civil chief with indifference as a garrulous old man more fit for talking than for anything else, and they rarely camped together."[159]

This comparison of the peace chief and war chief seems to attribute an equal degree of permanence to both offices. But the existence of a war chief as over against the temporary leader of small parties is suggested even more

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[156] Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 332-333.

[157] Paul Radin, *The Winnebago*, p. 144. See his description of the four nights wake.

[158] Our only later reference to this concept among the Blackfoot is found in Maximilian. A Piegan had been killed by some Bloods and the dead man's brother made this speech to the weeping relatives. "Why do you lament and cry?—see, I do not cry! he is gone into the other country and we cannot awaken him; but at least two Blood Indians must accompany him and wait upon him there." Thwaites, *op. cit.*, Vol. 23, p. 14.

[158a] "War in the open Plains between the natives is very different from war in the woods; in the former they act as a body in concert in all their movements, in the woods it is almost Man to Man." See Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 552.

[159] Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 346, 347.

11: Goldfrank E-4,5 (1939) 1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

joke with your brother's, it means you are in earnest." The only Blood confined to the insane asylum, whose case was not complicated by physical causes, attempted to murder his wife because he believed she was having intercourse with a ghost. Many a husband, approaching his end, threatens his mate with death, for only when she accompanies him on his final journey can he be sure that in the next world he alone will possess her.

Husbands, who need proof of good behavior and who can afford to pay for it, may insist that their wives "vow the tongues"[199] or put up the Sun Lodge, for only those who are chaste before and faithful after marriage can do so with impunity. Sometimes, however, the pressure may be so great, that a woman must take a chance. Urged by her husband who remained unconvinced concerning her virginity at marriage, Weasel Girl distributed the tongues at the Sun Dance. Her husband's uncle, noting that she failed to mention the names of any men she had rebuffed, suspected her avowal, and threw his piece of meat to a dog at his side. Later that evening, this dog was shot while making off with a chicken. His alertness and caution had saved him, the uncle was certain, from a sure and untimely death. That Weasel Girl, herself, only lived three years longer was further evidence that she had lied.

Suspicion is not always without cause, as it may well have been in this instance. The most casual encounter, the social dances in the dance hall, even the Sun Dance, offer innumerable opportunities for illicit adventures, and these are not missed. Many a husband has found his wife with her lover. But so obsessed are they by their suspicions, that every possibility of adultery immediately becomes a fact.

Informal wife-lending among the Blood is inconceivable whether to a casual friend[198] or a life-long "*taka*." Yet this act which cannot be tolerated in daily living, is ritually sanctioned when the sorcery roots are purchased by members in the Horn Society.[199] At this time, the wife of the buyer deposits her clothes in her husband's lap. Protected by a buffalo robe, she is taken to the tipi of the seller and ceremonially painted. She then "goes

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[198] Wissler, *Blackfoot Sun Dance*, p. 234 ff.

[198] Henry in his Journal (vol. 2, p. 526) states that the Blackfoot were a "nuisance in offering women." Wissler (*Social Life*, p. 10) observes that he believes these women were captives.

[199] Among the neighboring Cree the opposite situation existed. They practised informal wife exchange. D. G. Mandelbaum (*The Plains Cree*, p. 246) writes: "This relationship reflected considerable honor upon the participants, for only the most stout-hearted men could become intimate companions of their wives' paramours." But in a ceremony called Sitting Up Until Morning (*ibid.*, p. 228) although the "warriors of one society issued invitations to the wives or daughters of the members of other societies" and "at dawn, the men washed and painted the women's faces,

16: Hanks & Hanks E,P-4,5 (1938-1941) 1950
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Northern Blackfoot
Blackfoot Reserve

remain the honoured and respected heads of extended families whose lives are not chaotic. The residuals of a broken household rejoin their more stable relatives, while the new household, if not already provided with a residence, joins another group of relatives. 592

Death furnishes a final point where social disorganization may occur. It is faced today by some with terror, by others with equanimity. This seems to depend upon whether the dying person is mainly Christian or Blackfoot in outlook. Christians, uncertain of the future and concerned with the process of moral retribution, contrast with the Blackfoot who have no idea of atonement, for the mythical Sand Hills are considered a haven where good and bad alike are welcomed by their deceased kinsmen. 761 [775]

As death approaches, relatives gather around the dying person to bid him farewell. The immediate kin usually remain until the end, while others come and go. All are expected to help defray the cost of a funeral. Sometimes in the last hours a priest will be summoned to baptize a person of Indian faith, just as a kind of insurance. 763

After the last breath the formalities of mourning begin. In former times the nearest kin would don old clothes, cut their hair, and gash themselves with a knife. Old clothes and dishevelled appearance still obtain, and a mourner is vigilantly guarded by kinsmen to prevent serious self-injury. In the meanwhile others are dispatched to get the coffin, arrange for the burial service, and dig the grave. The corpse is attired in best raiment.

Funerals follow a simplified white pattern suffused with Indian custom. Rather than leave the coffin in the open or under a tipi, burial has been adopted to forestall grave robbers. There are no white prayers at the grave, but as the coffin is lowered, an intense wailing begins by all spectators. Kinsmen who heap the earth on top of the coffin receive special gifts. Once, a few years ago, however, a man received special supernatural powers in a dream to handle corpses and bury them, and he took no payment for his services. 764 [767]

The subsequent mourning follows the Blackfoot pattern. If the deceased is a key member of a household, especially a spouse, all unwilled possessions to the last packet of cigarettes are given away because the sight of these articles could only increase the pain of separation by reminding one constantly of the deceased. If a sibling, a child, or aged person dies, the mourning is not so intense, and the useful household effects remain in the hands of the mourners. In any case some kind of give-away with many people present is 765 768

796 824 [176] [237] Society rituals was traditionally made from two incense tongs, but recently two poles crossed at right angles have been used. Eagle feathers and cloth are attached at the top. The sage is tied at both ends of the arms and at the center, where the poles cross (Fig. 12), balls of sage are also used to cleanse the body during participation in the All Smoking Ceremony.

[782] In the Okan (Holy Lodge) of the Sun Dance the Lodge dancers wore sage around their wrists and ankles---as though they were themselves offerings.

[785] [302] Among the Peigan, one man fasted until the Okan center pole was raised; then he entered a sweat lodge and used sage to wipe off the black paint with which he had been covered. In early times sage was used as a bed for the Buffalo Stones (Iniskim) during buffalo drive rituals.

[823] It seems that the proper way to dispose of the sage was to throw it eastward rather than burn it or just put it down. There were other uses of [775] course. A person afraid of a ghost would cleanse himself with sage. A [773] man who was going to enter a horse race might do the same. There does not appear to be an origin myth for this plant.

SASKATOON

Amelanchier alnifolia Nutt

824 796 262 The saskatoon (Fig. 13) is a well known bush of the river bottoms and coulee slopes. Its berries make preserves and tasty snacks. They were included in Blackfoot ritual meals. A berry soup accompanied most ceremonial events, such as the transfer of a tipi design or the opening [462] of a Medicine Pipe bundle or a Beaver bundle. The woman prepared the soup from saskatoon berries, assorted roots, fat, and water. At an appointed [782] time during the ceremony this soup was served to all participants. The soup was blessed, and an offering of one of the berries was put back into the ground, before eating began. A few mouthfuls were taken; then the

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 29]

595 824 778 We have found fir needles in the initiation bundles of the Horn Society. We were told that the needles were mixed with the dry paint to make it smell better. Fir needles also were chewed and then sprayed over the Horn [783] ceremonial containers to purify them.

[783] Fir needles were used as incense during the transfer ceremonies of the Black Spring tipi design and the Bear Medicine Hat bundle.

PUFFBALLS

Lycoperdon spp.

824 The prairie puffball (a fungus) figured in Blackfoot religious life. The Blackfoot name for it is ka-ka-toos ("less powerful"), which implies that puffballs are stars fallen to earth during supernatural events.

[776] There is a story about the woman who married Morning Star and had a child by this supernatural being. When she returned to earth with the Natoas bundles and her child she was directed by the star-personage to keep her baby from touching the ground for fourteen days. She managed all right until the day she went for wood and left the child in the care of a grandmother. The grandmother was careless, and the baby touched the ground. It turned into a large puffball and returned to the heavens as the Fixed Star (North Star), plugging the hole left by the woman when she pulled out the Holy Turnip.

[782] [775] [372] [342] [532] Lycoperdon and other fungus, Polyporus, were used as incense to keep ghosts away. They were also included in the Firelighters bundle of the Horn Society for use as a kind of punk to light a fire easily. On certain painted lodges (for example the Otter lodge, shown in Fig. 20), the small circles at the base of the tipi represented the puffball (not lakes as is commonly thought), which insured fire to those within.

000 LUPINES

Lupinus spp.

824 Castilleja spp.

[524] Children rubbed the flowers on their bouncing arrows for color and shine.

[382] Arrow feathers were dyed a light yellow by combining them with the flowers and keeping them under pressure for a few hours.

[281] The flowers were used to shine and waterproof hides.

The color forms were considered the effect of age, the sequence moving from white to red to yellow.

824 Clematis verticellaris
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The plant, a creeping vine, was called "ghost rope" because it covered trees and bushes in a mysterious way. The leaves were used in the removal of "ghost bullets" (supernatural objects that were shot into people by ghosts). The bullets were removed by a diviner either with a sucking tube or through a slit in the skin made by a flint. Then the leaves were
[828] boiled and applied to the place where the bullets were removed. Fainting was often the result of coming near a ghost and the victim was revived with a smudge of the stem of this plant. At night, children wore the flowers in their hair to keep ghosts away.

824 Cornus stolonifera
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According to a certain myth there was a time when the bark of this bush was white and not red. Naapi saw some gophers playing in the warm ashes of a campfire. They would bury each other in the ashes and when it got too hot they would cry out and the others would uncover them. Naapi joined the game and persuaded them all to get in the ashes. Only a pregnant gopher resisted and Naapi let her go, saying that she was necessary to propogate the species. Then he roasted the gophers and made a frame of cornus stolonifera which he used as a plate while he ate them. That was how the

[Medicine Pipe Transfer Ceremony, 1890's]

four times], then gives the articles to host as before. Sometimes 2 or 3 will be on the floor at same time. One may have owl, or rattle alone; they can suit themselves and take whatever they like. [Not exactly. Past and present Medicine Pipe Owners may select anything from the Bundle, but some persons who have never owned a Bundle may have had the rights to certain objects within a Bundle transferred to them. They can then always dance with those objects but not with any other.] When using the whistle they begin at a high note and descend the scale with a continuous toot, toot, toot.

In making the first three feints to take the pipe, the dancer often retreats, dancing back around the lodge making the sign to kill (as if stabbing with a knife). [This preliminary dancing Wilson describes is no longer done at all. Today, when a man gets up to dance he takes the selected object, prays, and dances four times.] They nearly all dance the same step in this ceremony, a slow, regular, vigorous jump with both of the knees bent; the tunes and songs used upon these occasions are not sung at any other time; the step in dancing is also peculiar to Calumet [Pipe] men. There is a preference shown for the owl, which is most often taken up and almost always prayed to by the dancer as he takes it in his hands, or the host when it is handed back to him. [According to our traditions, the dead come back to visit the living in the bodies of owls. For that reason owls are respected as being very Powerful, and many participants desire the spiritual strength they get by dancing with one.] At one of these dances, while one of the dancers had the owl in his hands, I was amused to see a claw and leg of the bird fall to the ground, at which all present put on a very long face, thinking it a bad omen, and it is a strange fact that the owner of the pipe and host on that occasion died before the summer was out, his Calumet was buried with him, the stems lying on his breast. [Any accident that occurs during a sacred ceremony is con-

796 432 778 535 [422] [533] [534] [201] [178] [825] [775] 796 432 778 787

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

stepson [Sam Hairy Bull, who sold Eagle Ribs' Beaver Bundle to Edmonton] took the Pipe. The boy got drunk and gave the Pipe to Calling Last for some liquor. Calling Last found out that the Pipe was a fake, s he went and sold it in Browning, Montana. And that was the end of it.

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A BAD PIPE FROM THE GHOSTS

Our People fear the mystery of ghosts. They believe that ghosts are able to make living souls go along with them to the Sandhills, where all ghosts of Blood People are thought to dwell. One Blood man went with the ghosts and returned with a Medicine Pipe they had given him. This story has become a popular legend among our People. Here is Mokakin's version:

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This Medicine Pipe had the name Shaggy Medicine Pipe because it was all covered with eagle plumes that stuck way out. The Pipe was so new, the plumes weren't flattened from being wrapped for a long time.

Oki, this took place a long time ago—I don't know how many years. A man came back home from his war trail and found that his wife was already dead and buried. He had loved her very much and he became very lonely for her. Every night he went up on a hill and cried and mourned. One night a ghost came and spoke to him. "If you want to visit your wife I can take you to her. You've got to bring some tobacco for an offering. But don't bring any weapons or anything made [775] *out of metal." Ghosts don't like metal. The man went home and took off his knife and his rings and he picked up some tobacco. Then he went back up the hill.*

The ghost took the man a long ways through the dark, over hills and across rivers. Finally they came to a big open place where there was a big tipi camp. The ghost stopped in front of one of the tipis and told the man to go inside and wait. Inside, another ghost was sitting at the back. The

Although I feel that everything has a Spirit, and that Spirits are everlasting, I have never particularly believed in "ghosts." I mention them because during my walk home I had an experience that seemed to involve them. This story explains why some of our People don't like to travel at night, especially alone. 123 [484]

For some time, as I walked along, I had the strange feeling I was being followed by something I could not see. I was walking near the edge of the prairie where it drops off to the Bullhorn River below. Suddenly I came to a deep gully that began out on the prairie and opened up into the river bottom. Rather than hike way around it I decided to go straight across, by going down it and then climbing back up. I started to trot downhill when I heard the sound of heavy breathing behind me. My heart grew large in my chest as I came to a quick halt and turned my head to look behind me. I heard one more heavy breath, which sounded as though it had come from something also trying to stop quickly. At that instant there was a thumping sound from behind me, and then a piece of cow dung rolled by and came to rest not far from where I had stopped. I strained my eyes until I was convinced that no person or animal was behind me, and then began singing some of my sacred songs to keep myself company while I continued homeward. The next day I learned from one of the Old People that near this place were several old open graves, and that few people walk past them at night because encounters with ghosts usually result. [775]

There are numerous open graves around the reserve. Most of them are pretty well scattered from the effects of nature. Open graves were usually made by placing a filled coffin or homemade box under a cutbank or next to some large rocks and boulders. Less often, the coffin was covered with a pile of rocks, or placed inside a specially built little cabin. Bodies were usually placed in open graves during epidemics, or by family members who did not believe in burial underground 764 766 [177]

[p. 227-B]

but were prevented by the government from placing the bodies on scaffolds or in trees. 766 [177]

According to tradition, the Spirits of our People go to a place called the Sandhills after the person's body dies. Good, bad, or indifferent as the person was when physically alive, so will the Spirit go on forever in the Sandhills. A deceased person's most cherished possessions were usually placed with the body, so that their Spirits could continue to be together. The same was true of a man's favorite horse. It was often shot by his grave. Favorite horses that were not killed often died of starvation while mourning the loss of their master. 775 [764] [231]

It is thought to take some time for a person's Spirit to leave the body completely and go on to the Sandhills. For that reason, a person would sometimes be brought back from death if he had unusual spiritual powers and had instructed a close friend or relative how to recall them. For the same reason, few people would touch a dead person or go near his burial ground, especially at night. It is said that a dead person's Spirit, or ghost, often tries to persuade others to accompany it. Widows who commit suicide by their husbands' graves are said to have been persuaded to join them on their way to the Sandhills. At the Sandhills it is said that life goes on much like here, only in Spirit. The Old Way of life is the one that goes on, of course. [761] [762]

Some of our People have slept by old graves in search of Power from the Spirits who may be there. I was once inspired to seek such Power. In my dream I was visited by a skeleton-man in a 769 787 123

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 228-A]
[p. 228-A]

24: Schultz F-3 (1877-1947) 1980 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

near-by mountains, and small game such as rabbits, grouse, porcupines, and beavers were becoming very scarce. It was plainly evident that unless food, and great quantities of it, would be brought out to them, the whole tribe would die from starvation before the coming of another summer.

While I was in Red Paint's camp, the Rev. Prando, S. J., arrived for a talk with its leading men and asked me to be his interpreter. Soon we were thirty or forty gathered in Red Paint's large lodge, as one after another they told of their sufferings and asked the priest in some way to try to get food for them. He replied that he fully realized their needs and would do all that he possibly could for them. In the meantime, he said, they should follow his teachings; having led pure lives, when they came to die, their souls or, as I had to interpret it, "shadows" could go away up in the sky, there join World Maker (God) and ever afterward live happily. And then, concluding, he said impressively: "But mind this: if you fail to live good lives, then, when you die, your shadows will go deep down beneath the ground, down to that bad one, Fire Maker, where he will keep you forever burning."

Followed a long silence, broken at last by Red Paint. Said he, impressively: "Black Robe, the whites can do many wonderful things. I doubt not their ability, when they die, to go to their World Maker, far up in the sky. But look at us: have we wings to enable our shadows to fly up into the blue? No. Impossible for us to go up there. Have we claws like the badger to enable us to dig down to Fire Maker, for him to roast us perpetually? No. Black Robe, it is that, when we die, our shadows walk or ride out to the Sand Hills, north of here, there forever to remain. There to hunt shadow buffalo; roast shadow meat over shadow, heatless fires; live in shadow lodges. That, Black Robe, is what awaits us all. And so, I finish." With that, they all arose and one by one, in silence, left the lodge. And sad and worried was the expression on Father Prando's face.

Well, during the more than fifty years since that time, the priests and other missionaries have failed to change in any way the beliefs of the sun-worshiping Blackfeet tribes. Within the past two months[2]

[2] In the summer of 1936.

Their owners were called pipe stem bearers,[A] and the position was one of great distinction. The pipe stem bearer was regarded as a medicine man, had power to quell frays and disorders that none would gainsay, took precedence even of the chiefs in treaties and councils, and their lodges were places of refuge to which the criminal of every grade could fly and be safe from harm. They were to be distinguished by a braid of hair in the center of the forehead, which hung down before the face, and they painted the face in a peculiar manner by a red cross down the nose and across the forehead and a red or green spot on each cheek. The pipe was kept in a skin case painted red, and was only taken out upon important occasions and then with great ceremony, the assembled people sitting quiet, grave and attentive, while the bearer made incense by dropping dry cedar leaves upon live coals and chanted in slow time a guttural song accompanied by peculiar movements of the arms. These pipes were all very old, apparently handed down through many generations until the occasion that had conferred upon them their peculiar virtue was lost even from tradition. A pipe that accident might have shown seemingly to possess unusual power could be dedicated as a sacred pipe by a convocation of medicine men but it was a privilege rarely exercised. There were only about half a dozen of them in each band of the Blackfeet and these were held in great veneration. Indeed, they might almost be termed the Bible of the Blackfeet and to swear upon the Sacred pipe was the most binding oath a Blackfoot could make. Perjury or disregard of the obligations of such an oath was believed to be followed by instant death. The ownership of these pipes might be transferred by barter, but their bearers were seldom willing to surrender the dignity they conferred. In value they were computed at about nine horses.

Religion

The Blackfeet believed in a Great Spirit who is all-powerful and good and has allotted to them an existence after death. The future life they think is to be passed at a point in the Saskatchewan, which they call the Sand

A, [i.e.,] owners of the Medicine or Sacred pipe--Analyst]

33: Bradley G-3 (1871-1877) 1923
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

775 Hills. Here all their ancestors are invisible to men, but pursuing about the same career they did in life. Their ghosts sometimes visit the living and talk to them in a whistling sound, which they hear in the sighing of the wind, the creaking of lodge poles and the rustling of leaves.

SUN DANCE

796 346 [313] [535] The principal religious ceremony is the sun dance. About the last of August each band resorts to a suitable locality where poles can be obtained for building the lodge in which the dance takes place. The poles are cut from twenty-five to thirty feet long and inclined together like the poles of the ordinary lodge, the upper ends being secured to a single upright pole standing in the center of the the enclosed space and projecting some three or four feet [824] above the rest. The exterior is then thatched with pine or other evergreen boughs so as to exclude the sun, only one opening being left, which serves as the entrance. The lodge thus prepared is capable of holding from three to 796 four hundred persons. In the meantime, a feast is prepared, comprising every variety of food that the resources [684] of the band can command. Of this feast all partake for three days, none being excluded therefrom but such women 796 as have been guilty of lewdness. While the feast is in 535 progress the dance goes on within the lodge, lasting without intermission for three days and nights. The dancers are some half dozen in number, all men selected from the entire band and they are stripped naked, the entire body, including the face being usually painted with white earth. They stand looking upward at the center pole of the lodge with a fixed gaze, blowing a short whistle held between the teeth, the feet a little apart and immovable, while the body is lifted up and down upon the knees accompanied by a movement of the raised arms similar to the flapping of a bird's wings, the elbows being bent at nearly a right angle. During the entire period of the dance the performers are allowed no nourishment but such as they can extract from a pipe; they often faint from exhaustion, when they are revived with cold water and again resume

48: Bushnell A-4 (no date) 1927 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

000 were discovered more than half a century ago, is reproduced in Plate 7.

Unfortunately, the photograph which is shown in Plate 8 has not been identified. It belongs to the collection in the National Museum, but when and where made is not known. As it reveals the custom of the Northern Cheyenne, the burial scaffold may be regarded as having been erected by some members of that tribe. The supports of the scaffold at the corner nearest the position of the camera had fallen, thus allowing the scaffold with its burden to sag and to reveal more clearly the mass which rested upon the platform. One body had evidently been wrapped and placed within a travois basket, closely resembling and suggesting the example in the collection of the National Museum. One or more bodies, in addition to that in the travois basket, may have been on the platform. The six buffalo skulls had undoubtedly been placed upon the ground, near the scaffold, for some well-defined purpose or reason.

Blackfoot Confederacy

619 The allied tribes who formed this confederacy were the Siksika,
648 or Blackfeet proper; the Kainah, or Bloods; and the Piegan. Asso-
131 ciated with these were the Atsina, one of the divisions of the Arapaho. The habitat of these comparatively numerous tribes was the rugged, mountainous region about the headwaters of the Missouri, with the adjacent plains—a region where game was plentiful, where the deep valleys offered protection against the rigors of the long winters, and where their enemies would seldom penetrate. During the earlier days of their contact with Europeans some bands of the confederated tribes dominated the region as far north as the Saskatchewan.

764 Maximilian, who came in contact with these tribes during the summer of 1833, wrote regarding the customs of the people at the time of the death of one of their number: "When a Blackfoot dies, they do not bury him in the ground if they can avoid it, but sew him up in a buffalo robe, dressed in his best clothes, his face painted red, but without his weapons, and lay him in some retired place, in ravines, rocks, forests, or on a high, steep bank, and often cover the body with wood or stones, that the wolves may not get at it.
[431] Frequently, when they cannot find a solitary spot, the corpse remains above ground in a kind of wooden shed, and they were often obliged to bury it, or to give it to the Whites as a desirable present,
765 which cannot be refused. The relations cut off their long hair,
[304] smear it, as well as their faces and clothes, with whitish-grey clay, and, during the time of mourning, wear their worst clothing. Often,
775 too, they cut off a joint of a finger. They believe the dead go into

48: Bushnell A-4 (no date) 1927 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

another country, where they will have lack of nothing; and that they have often been heard when they were summoned to smoke a pipe together. At the funeral of rich Indians, several horses are often killed upon the spot; and we were told of instances when twelve or fifteen horses were killed in this manner at the funeral of a celebrated chief . . . The relations assemble at the residence of the deceased, and even the men lament and wail. The corpse is generally buried on the first day, and in case of death during the night, it is removed on the following morning." (Maximilian, pp. 258–259.) He likewise referred briefly to the treatment of the sick: "The medicine men or physicians of the Blackfeet are very unskilful. We always saw them take water in their mouths, which they spit out over the wounded . . . Drums and rattles (schischikue) were daily used in their attendance on the sick, in the closed tent . . . These Indians have some efficacious remedies derived from the vegetable kingdom, one of which is a whitish root from the Rocky Mountains, which is called, by the Canadians, rhubarb, which is said to resemble our rhubarb in its effect and taste, and likewise to act as an emetic. Another root is esteemed to be a powerful remedy against the bite of serpents. In all cases they have recourse to the drum and the rattle, and have great confidence in the intolerable noise caused by those instruments. The Blackfeet make their rattles of leather, wood, or bladder." (Op. cit., p. 258.)

The burial and mourning customs of the Blackfeet were interestingly described by another observer a few years later: "The Blackfeet do not place their dead on scaffolds but either in a hole well covered to keep off the wolves, or they leave them in the lodge with everything just as it is when they die. In that case the wolves of course eat their bodies very soon; and I am told that in this way the body of nearly every Blackfoot is disposed of. When one of them is in mourning he puts white earth on his head and goes out before his lodge wailing most piteously; as soon as the neighbors see that they all rush to his lodge and take it and everything it contains, leaving him nothing but his horse. The death of a relation is therefore a very serious affair, since a man loses all his property as well as his friend." (Culbertson, p. 126.)

The two preceding accounts contain rather conflicting statements, but they may refer to different groups of the Blackfoot confederacy. Possibly the tribal customs have undergone a change within a comparatively short time. This would be suggested by the following quotation: "Their manner of burial has always been (until recently) to inclose the dead body in robes or blankets, the best owned by the departed, closely sewed up, and then, if a male or chief, fasten in the branches of a tree so high as to be beyond the reach of wolves, and then left to slowly waste in the dry winds. If the body was

48: Bushnell A-4 (no date) 1927 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

184 114 764 that of a squaw or child, it was thrown into the underbrush or jungle, where it soon became the prey of the wild animals. The weapons, pipes, &c., of men were inclosed, and the small toys of children with them. The ceremonies were equally barbarous, the [765] relatives cutting off, according to the depth of their grief, one or more [304] joints of the fingers, divesting themselves of clothing even in the coldest weather, and filling the air with their lamentations. All the sewing up and burial process was conducted by the squaws, as the men would not touch nor remain in proximity to a dead body." (Yarrow, p. 161.) The preceding notes were prepared by John Young at the Blackfoot Agency, and tell of conditions as they existed some 50 years ago, but it is doubtful if he was acquainted with local customs of the more distant villages, where the older methods of disposing of the dead may still have been practiced.

764 Another and what is intended to be a general account of the burial customs of these tribes written only a few years later is very interesting as it contains references to certain customs not mentioned by other writers. It begins: "Their funeral and burial ceremonies indicate their belief in the immortality of the soul. These forms are of [765] a similar type among all the tribes composing the nation. They place their dead, dressed in gaudiest apparel, within a tent, in a sitting posture, or occasionally fold them in skins and lay them on high scaffolds out of the reach of wild beasts, under which the relatives weep [775] and wail. The arms and horses are buried with them, to be used in the long journey to the spirit land, showing the possession of the idea of the dual nature of matter and spirit." (Robinson, pp. 193–194.) And the same writer continues and relates a curious custom 768 following the death of a child: "Immediately upon its decease, the whole village rush into the lodge and take possession of whatever portable property they can seize upon, until the grief-stricken parents are stripped of all their worldly possessions, not even excepting their clothing. The only method of evading the custom is to secrete the most valuable property beforehand, generally a matter difficult 765 of accomplishment." (Op. cit., p. 194.) Evidently the death of a child caused much sorrow among the people, and as told by one who was well acquainted with the ways of life of Blackfeet: "Late one afternoon as I was pursuing my way through the outskirts of the camp, I heard a low sad wail, and on looking up, saw a poor woman meanly clad, the beautiful garments of yesterday having been taken [304] from her. Her legs from the knees to the feet had been gashed with a knife and the blood was clotted upon them. Her hair had been cut off, and one of the fingers on the left hand had been severed at the first joint. A piece of wood lay in the palm of the injured hand, the clotted blood was mingled with ashes, which had been sprinkled over

48: Bushnell A-4 (no date) 1927 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

it. I spoke to her and she pointed to a tree, where hidden within the branches lay a little bundle, the darling of her bosom, recently dead. She turned from me and sang her coronach, mentioning the name of her babe and calling upon it to come back to her. Deeply and tender these Indian mothers love their children, and no suffering is too great for them to bear on their behalf." (Maclean, p. 66.)

765 [764] [593]

In the same account is a reference to the placing of the dead "in the crotches of trees, or raised platforms, and in lodges," the latter probably resembling the similar form of burial as mentioned among the Crow and Oglala. The writer whose work has just been quoted continues and gives a brief description of the treatment of the sick, and likewise of conditions that exist after death. He says: "When anyone is sick a part of the garments of the sick person is placed upon the top of the lodge, that being shaken by the wind the prairie spirits may be induced to stop upon their journey, and the medicine man earnestly performs his incantations and giving of medicines, assisted by the friends of the sick person, and the gods, listening to the prayers, will aid in the overthrow of the evil genius which dwells in the body. During a severe time of sickness in one of the camps, as I sat beside the medicine man in one of the lodges, a large number of children were brought in, and the medicine man, taking the dress from the top of the lodge, rubbed the children's persons with it, as a protection against the attack of the disease. When anyone dies, he is said to have gone to the Sand Hills.

764 171 755 775

"The people are afraid of the spirits of the dead, and at once they remove the lodge, and sometimes even tear down the house, lest the spirit of the deceased return and inflict injury upon the living. They believe that the spirits of the dead hold communion with each other, and require food and clothing like the living, only as they are spiritual, they need the spiritual part, and not the material, for their sustenance. (Op. cit., p. 67.)

ARAPAHO

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The ancient habitat of the Arapaho, before they reached the open prairie lands to follow the buffalo, was probably in the timbered regions northeast of the Minnesota River.

The Atsina, a division of the Arapaho more closely connected with the Blackfeet, were usually mentioned by the early narrators as the Gros Ventres of the Prairies, and as such they were alluded to by Maximilian. The latter wrote during August, 1833: "The Gros Ventres des Prairies . . . In the main, their customs agree with those of the Blackfeet, and they dispose of their dead in the same manner." (Maximilian, p. 234.)

[pp. 14-86 not processed]

53: Uhlenbeck L-5 (1910-1911) 1912 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Piegan
Montana

539 764 tsiχ´p. Omá nínau ki omá manikâ´piu aistótaχpapistoaiau. Nitúyi omá akékoan nitáiχ´tsaù. Itáipststsàiau, mátæstaχkiχ´tsàuaiks. Nitáûaniχ´pinan „ikínaua", ánninitstsàiaiks.

human hair]. Some of them had scarlet paint all over their faces. Some others had yellow paint all over their faces. When it was a young man, the dead person was dressed the same way. When it was a girl, her dress was buckskin. It was with elk-teeth. There where they died, their lodge was put up; it was fixed up inside [just as if people were going to live there]. A man and a young man had willow-pillows put on each side of them [one at the head, and one at the feet]. The same way a girl was laid down. They were put in the lodge, their faces were not covered up. We said [in the case of] those, that were laid that way, „a dead man's lodge".

539 775 Akóχtsik nímoχtsistapitapiiχ´pinaniks nitáuanikinan, inióki, omí apátoχsòχtsi ánninmaie aitapáuop, ánistoχpO´maχkspatsikùi. A´nuoχk ómaχksimiks áisakiaûanìau, aitapáuosi O´maχkspatsikùi. A´uauìau, amó otsistáuosin áuauàkimatsiu eini. A´uakasiks itstsíi, ki mí'nists akauóyi, ki ámoi nitáuatoχpinànists itsiniákauòyi. Ikáitamapsiiχ´k onám otsistáuosina. Okánistauamotsiiχ´pi. Ki ámoia otátoapinànists okánistaiχ´tsiχ´pi. Kánnyaie nâ´χkanistaitsinikòko.

Our ancestors, from long times ago, used to tell us, that, when we die, there is [a place] over there in the north, [where] we go to, [which] is called the „Big Sand-hills". Now the old people still say, that we go to the Big Sand-hills. They say, [that] these ghost-people are chasing buffalo. Antelopes are there, and the berries are plentiful, and the things that we eat are plentiful. The ghost-people have a happy time. They still invite each other. And all their holy things are still there. That is how I am told about them.

[Cf. Grinnell blt 193 sq. 273. 44 sq. 62. 94. 127 sqq. 132 sqq., Wissler-Duvall mbi 163, McClintock ont 148 sqq. 164 sq.]

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539 756 787

the body. That is what I know about it.

[Cf. in general GRINNELL blt 191 sq., and for N°. 2 WISSLER-DUVALL mbi 95 sqq.]

Snowblindness.

539 821 753 [757]

Paχtóχpiks itsitáiχ'tsiau autúsi nistsáuòmaχkoχpotaii. Matáinoàuaiksau. Kónskuyi ítsksìmaiau. Iiksínàkimiau. Istápuiinàniki kónskuyi, itsitáipstauaniàu noápsspinàniks. Nitsítàuakinàniau, nitáistamiapstsiiχ'pinan. Asipists nitáutsikstsiχ'pinàni. A'nnistsiaie nitsítaisapapìniχ'pinàni noápsspinàniks. A'nnistsiaie itáutsisksisiau. Nitáisotàmiàpiχ'pinan. Amóksi paχtóχpiks, áitsiniχ'kàsi amóia kóniskùyi, itáχtsikatsìuasiau. A'nniaie akóχtak A'kai-Pckàniua manistáuakàiks. A'nnakaie nímoχkskàniχ'pinan, náχkanistapistutoaχpinàniau. Kénniaie nitsó.

The germs of the snow make their appearance in the spring with the last big snow. They cannot be seen. They are insects from the snow. They are very small. When we travel about in the snow, then they will fly in into our eyes. Then they eat us, then we are blind. We chew sinews [till they are] soft and wet. We put those in our eyes and pull them along. They [the insects] stick to them [the sinews]. Then we can see again. When the snow is all gone, then these snow-germs turn into grasshoppers. That is the way, the Peigans of long ago were eaten by them. From them [the ancient Peigans] we learned, how we are to cure them. And that is all.

Ghosts.

539 775 [759]

Itstsii istaχpéksiks. A'nnikskaie nitáistunnoanàniau. Natósiks inísau, á'nnikskaukiùu áukàpsiau. Nitáipikokinàniau, nimátnipyâχkokinàniau. A'ioχtoχkòχsiks áis-

There are haunting spirits. That are those, we are afraid of. When medicine-men die, those are the ones, [that] are bad. We are shot at by them,

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ksinoyiau, matáipiiχkoyìuaiks. A´isksitautsikitsinòaiau áioχtoχkoχsòpiks. Okónuaists kokúsi omá áioχtoχkoχsiu sepísaksisì, otátsipìkokaie. A´kítsipìm. A´kstæmomatapiòkau. A´kstæmìniu. A´kstæmisksinoàu, stáaui otsínik. A´nni sókanistòksistotakìau. Kokúsi sakiáupisau, matápiks ákitoχtsimiàu, ksiksímoχkisau. A´ksòkàs omá matápiu, akitsísaisaksìu. Otákitskùnakakàie stáaui. A´kstæmapotsekinìsaitamiàu. A´kitanistàu: Kítsikiχ´pà? A´mo saã´χts matápiu nitsítsinoàu. A´kstæmisksinoàu, otsipíkokaie.

they do not stay away from us. They know those that are sick, they do not stay away from them. They are seen about by those that are sick. When a sick person goes out in the night from the lodges, he will be shot by [a ghost]. He will enter. Then he will go to sleep. Then he will die. Then he will be known, [that] a ghost killed him. That is one thing, that they [the ghosts] do. When they are still sitting in the night, the people will hear, that they whistle. When a person is going to sleep, then he will go out. He will be shot by a ghost. Then he will breathe as if he were going to be smothered. He will be asked: What is the matter with you? [He will answer:] I have seen a person right here outside [of the lodge]. Then he will be known, that he is shot by [a ghost].

Ki omá natósìua núpiua isksinóau, sokápæsksinìm pikáksists. Támotànistau. A´χsìi pekáni ákoχkòtau, kipúχksokìnis. A´, nitákitapò. Otókimàtsisi ákstæmòtsim. O´χkotokì ákaitaisuyiχ´takiòp. A´sáni stámòtsim, otsísts iχ´tanístutsim. Itæχpískiu. Osókàsimi ákstàmsàutsim. A´kstæmitakikàiχ´taiu omá áioχtoχkoχsiua. A´kitapaisotoyiuaie. A´kitoχkòtsimaie. A´momauk ıtstsíu, ómáχtsauoχkòtsaitamiχ´pì. A´kniksistòkimau. Stsíkiks matuyí ákotoχkànnimaiau. A´ksitspinatòmiau. A´kitsatapìksimiauaie. Ot-

And a medicine-man, an old man, is known, [that] he knows the ghost-shots very well. Then they go and ask for him. They will give him fine things, if he comes soon to doctor. [The medicine-man says:] Yes, I shall come. Then he will take his drum. They have already a stone in the fire [in the lodge where he is going to doctor]. Then he takes paint, he puts some of it on his hands. He puts some [paint] on his face. Then he will take off his shirt. [The medicine-man always paints himself

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539 sists ákitapitstsimiñuaie. Amóiauk,
755 isátsik, tsiáie motokŭ́n. Sitokóχ-
[802] tsim ánnimaie aχsoáyin. Stsíkiks
[291] ámoks auotánokitsìks iχ'táskunaki̯àu. Kokŭ́si itápatauaχkàiks. Isipyáuyisau, ánnikskaie mútsikskatsimanoàiauaie. A'ĩmoyìniauaiks. Kipitákeks ánno itauŭ́χkanniau. Iχ'tapáisatapiksìmiau. A'nnikskaie otáiinikoaiauaiks.

539 Otsitáikimmokòaiauaiks. Itái-
775 pæpàukniau. Otsítauaistamatsokò-
787 aiauaiks. Amáitsoàskuists itsitás-
756 tsòkniau. Tsíkaiistsistotokòniauaiks. Itáiistapiskapatsiauaiks maiáiiauaàiks. A'uannìàkiauaiks. Mistsists iχ'tauáuaiàkiauaàiks. A'umaiistsistotutsìnikiauaiks, itápæsàmup, and takes off his shirt, when he is going to doctor.] Then the sick person will lie on his back. Then he [the medicine-man] will find out, what is the matter with him. Then he will feel the place [where the sick person has been shot]. [Then he will say:] It is right here, what is the cause that he cannot breathe. He has drummed already. Some [medicine-men] will lance with a grass. They are going to suck it [the grass]. They will throw it [the shot] out. They are going to spit it out in their hands. [They will say:] Here it is, look at it, which is hair [used by the ghosts to shoot with]. In the middle [of that hair] is a cockle-bur. Some other ghosts shoot with finger-nails. They [the ghosts] go around in the night. If people eat during the night, that is another thing, they [the ghosts] do not like. They pull their mouths [viz. of the people who eat during the night] crooked. Old women lance with a flint right there [where the mouth is crooked]. From there they pull it out [what the ghosts have done]. Those [the ghosts] are the ones that kill [the people].

[Sometimes] [the ghosts] pity them. Then they [the people] dream. [In their dream] they [the ghosts] show them [what to do]. They [the people] will sleep in thick forests. Then [the ghosts] bother them. Then they [the ghosts] will pull off their robes.

miauàiks. Màtsitstsíp, nitáiistsistotòki. Otáχkuiinnimànoauaists itsitáisapiχ'takìau. Itauánistsiauàiks: Kímmokit, ámoi autsisátot. Nitsikímmatàps, kímmokit. Matsitáiokaiau. Nitúyi ómatsitaumatapausiàkiokoaiauaiks. Matsitápæsæmìauaiks. Mátsitstsìp nitáiistsistotòki. A'istæmisksinoyìauaiks: Stáau amóχk táuauniàkiokaχk. Nitúyi otaχkúiinuimànoauaists áisapoχtomoyìau. Auatsímmoiχ'kamìau. Nánoauasàiniau, màχksikimmísaie. Otáiistæpskokòaiauaiks: Místaput. Nisoóyi, saiitáiistapòsi, ánniaie otsítaikimmokàie. O'kási, itáinoyiuàie. Otsítauanikàie: Kítoχkot, káχknisokinàks, pikáksists kimátoχkot. Kánnoχk kitáiksiniχ'p, kítoχkòtaχp, káχkanistaisokìnaχpi matápiun.

They [the ghosts] hit them. They hit them with sticks. When they bother them too much, then [the people] look for them. There are none [that means: they cannot find them], that are bothering them. They put some tobacco in their pipes. Then they tell them: Pity me, take this and smoke it. I am very poor, pity me. Then [after having offered the pipe to the ghost] they go again to sleep. The same way they [the ghosts] start to hit them again. Then they look out for them again. There are none, that are bothering them. Then they know them: It is a ghost, that hits me. The same way they put some more tobacco in their pipes. They pray to them [to the ghosts]. Finally they start to cry, that he [the ghost] might pity them. Then they are ordered away by [the ghost]: Go away. If he [the person] does not go away [before], he will be pitied by [the ghost], [when the ghost says] the fourth time [the word: Go away]. When he sleeps, he sees him [the ghost]. He [the ghost] tells him: I give you, that you may doctor, [and] I give you also the ghost-shots [i. e. the power to inflict them]. And now you know it, that I give you, that you may doctor the people.

Stsíkiks stáaiks áuχkumìau. A'istæmaioχtòaiau, áuχkumìsau. Apatóχtak ánnakaie istúnnatàpsii stáaiks. Akáinitsìau áioχtoχkoχsiks. Annikai tukskámiks matsi-

Other ghosts will yell. Then they are heard, that they yell. It was in the olden times, [that] the ghosts were very dangerous. They would kill the sick. Of

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539 nióauaists áuapatsistaniskapatòmi-
7775 auaists. Kɛnníksi nâχkáikamotàii
[1759] otsíksistotoauàiks. A´istunnimiàu
pɛχksimóists, okúyists pɛχksímisikiàists. Túkskɛmiks ápaiòkaiks, maiáiuauaiks mataiámapiksistsìauaiks. Kokúsi áinoaiàu, âχpakúyisuyiàu. Sipyápoχkitòpauki, matɛskétsiau ponokâ´mitaiks. Itáinisìau matápiks. A´ioχtòaiau, áiimisàu. A´uχkumiau: ũ'ũ'ũ'ũ'ũ. A´iimìau, áiksiksìmimiau. Moyísts mátsitaipìmiau. Mánistàmiks úpɛstòkiiauàiks. Itsinítstsiau ksaχkúm. Niétaχtaists, atsoáskuists ánnistskaie itápàupiau.

539 Stsíkiksi áioχtoχkoχsiks má-
7775 ksinisau, kokúsi máksinisau, ák-
7763 stɛmapinàku, natósiua aipísp-
7753 skapìs, maiái ainoási, ákitokakìu. A´iauà iníu, mátsikamotàu. Mátaisɛmòa ákɛskχsaioχtoyìau stáaiks. Kokúsi sakiáupis, ákitoχtsimìu, niniχ´kátaiiχ´k. Saâ´χts otákanikàie: A´umatàuop. A´kanistsiuàie: Nitáuɛatòt. Kɛnníksi stsíkiks, sauumáisokàpsɛpsisàu, ákstɛminoyìau, omík matápìin itsipímin. A´ksokàpaisɛpìu, ánno otánistutòkaie. Matákoχkoikìua oápɛpiks, mátàkaiàpìuats. Ki omá stsík áskχsaioχtoχkoχsiu, sakiáupis moyísi, saâ´χts ákitaisoinoyiuaie. A´kitsauatokàkin. A´kisome other people they would pull back their tongues [into their throats]. And some of the people, they had done that to, would be saved. They [the ghosts] are afraid of anything that smells bad, [e. g.] hair that smells bad when it is burned. They would throw the robes of some people, that were sleeping about, eastward. They are seen in the night, as if they were burning. If we are riding around in the night, they scare the horses too. Then the people will fall off. They are heard, that they laugh. They make the noise: ũ'ũ'ũ'ũ'ũ. [When] they laugh, they laugh as if they were whistling. They will also enter the lodges. They make noise by hitting the lodge-poles. They are all over the world. The rivers and the forests, there it is, that they stay about.

When some sick people are going to die — if they are dying in the night —, if the next morning, when the sun rises high, [the sick person] sees his robe, then he will be allright. Somebody [who] is dying, will be saved. After a short while [the sick] will always hear ghosts. When [a sick person] is still sitting in the night, then he will hear, that his name is called. Somebody [a ghost] outside will tell him: Let us go. He [the sick person] will say to [the ghost]: Go by yourself. And some others, before they can see well, will see, there is a person coming in.

tapàukasiu. Mátakatokakìua. Omí matápi itsinóyiu annyáukinai otánistutòkaie. Iχ´tsáuatokakìuaie. Otsinóaχsi, sotámæskχsainoyiuaie. Omátsipioχkòkatsi. Námoχkitoχkànsokìnau. Itsítsksûku, otánistutòiiχ´pini, otáumatsìpiokàie.

Then he will see clearly that one, that has done something to him. There will be nothing the matter with his eyes, [but after having seen the ghost] he will not see any more. And another person, who is always sick, when he is still sitting in the lodge [during the night], will see him [the ghost] through the lodge outside. Then [afterwards] he will be out of his mind. He will be trying to catch something [being out of his mind]. He will not have his right mind any more. He has seen the person, that has done something to him. That is why he is out of his mind. When he has seen him [once], then he sees him all the time. He [the ghost] does not stay away from him. Everybody doctored him [but it has been of no use]. A still harder thing, he [the ghost] does to him, is, that he takes him away [i. e. that he makes him die].

Á´nnyaie nitakáukistutakìau. Annóχk táupokasokòpimanànìnau, táiskauatainàpimanànìnau. Apatóχtæk áutoyiuaiks otokâ´noauàists. Matáutsimìàu, itáisapoχtòmiauaie skinétsimàn. Istsíkiks okósoauaiks otáisakakimmauùiks inísaiks, otsítstsiχ´paiks, aitoksíkinakisàiks. Matsitâ´χkanautsimiùnists kanáuχkists. Sápanistsìminai ítomópistsiùnaists náipistsi. Otáiikinaχkanoànaists. Ki annóχk ánetòyi imitáiks.

That are the things, [the ghosts] have done. Now we are mixed up with them [i. e. they are everywhere among us], [so] we do not mind them any more. In the olden times [the people] used to take their [the ghosts'] hair. They took it again, they put it in a sack. When some people's children, that they loved very much, died, then, where they were buried, just their bones were left. They [the people] took all the bones. It [the child's bones] was complete. They tied them [the bones] up in a piece

attend his funerall These officials had placed a bronze plaque on Two Guns' headstone *proving* that Two Guns had loaned his likeness to the nickell No, no one had actually *seen* the plaque, but the plaque was there! If I didn't believe it, I could go look for myself. 000

Even the lady who had verified Two Guns' relationship to the Chief believed that Two Guns had been on the nickel. She declared that there was indeed a bronze plaque on Two Guns' grave, and if I didn't believe it I had but to visit the old Catholic cemetery and become convinced. Two Guns was buried right by the north gate of the cemetery, and I would have no trouble in finding his resting place.

So on a very cold and extremely windy day I drove to the southwest fringe of Browning to do Two Guns the respect of at least visiting his burial place. My first discovery was that both gates of the cemetery (if they could be called gates) were on the east side, but this fact was hardly worthy of issue and I parked my station wagon close to the northernmost east gate and began a search for the plaque-bearing grave of John Two Guns. 122

A careful survey of all graves within perhaps thirty yards of the gate revealed no sign of a bronze plaque or of Two Guns' name but did serve to impress me with the singular character of this cemetery. The cemetery grounds were obviously unattended. Indians customarily lavish little attention upon burial places, believing that the spirit is still living and that the body, once laid to rest, is no longer important, and among the long grass and the profusion of wild prairie flowers was an intriguing variety of graves. Most cemeteries depress me, but this was a friendly cemetery despite the gray sky and the cutting wind and with real interest I examined the mounds and depressions which signified the individual burying places. Some were marked with granite head and foot stones, some had crosses of stone or wood or even of foam plastic, many had simply a metal identification holder (upon which almost invariably the name was no longer legible), and more than a few were crowned with an ordinary fieldstone upon which the name was or had been painted. "Billy," was all that one grave spoke. [769] [775]

Most of the plots, including the unmarked ones, of which there were several, were outlined with small stones, and although inscriptions such as "Asleep In Jesus" and "Christ Is My Hope" assured me that the graveyard was indeed a Christian one, I noted that grave decorations included everything from flowers, both real and artificial, to small bundles of medicine sticks.

watched, Yellow Wolf cast off the blanket and sat up. This is the story he told:

"When I passed away, my spirit went to the Sand Hills. I found myself sitting on a large hill, looking out upon a land that was flat and desolate. I knew that my spirit had entered the Sand Hills, and I started down the hill and across the barren plain is search of my parents.

"I had not gone very far when I encountered an elderly gentleman. He asked me where I was going, and when I told him that I was searching for my father and mother, he said, *Yes, you will find them here.*

"So I continued onward, and shortly I met with another old gentleman. He, too, asked me where I was going, and I told him that I was going down to find my father and mother. *Yes,* he said, *they are here. You will find them camped not far from here. They are in a painted lodge.*

"So I found the painted lodge, and entered it, but instead of making me welcome as I had expected, my father just looked at me and then turned his face away. My mother would not even raise her eyes to look at me. I stayed in the lodge just a short while, and since it was apparent that I was not welcome there I decided that I might just as well return to where I had come from.

"So I started back, and soon I encountered again the second of the gentlemen I had met on the way down. He was carrying a log chain and a black handkerchief. He asked me where I was going, and when I told him that I was returning to the other world—the world where my body was—he would not at first believe me. But finally I convinced him that I meant what I said, and then he put the log chain on the ground and covered it with the black handkerchief and asked me to pick them up. So I picked them up, and I found that the log chain had broken apart into separate links. Then the old gentleman placed the links on the ground and covered them with the black handkerchief, and when he picked them up again I saw that all the links had joined together again into a single chain. The old gentleman gave me the log chain and the black handkerchief and told me to take them with me back to where I was going.

"So I continued onward, and before long I met again the first of the old men I had met on the way down. He asked me where I was going, and I told him that my father and mother had not made my spirit welcome in their lodge and so I was

539 taking my spirit back to where my body was. At first the old
• 775 man would not believe me, but when I told him that I meant
787 what I said, he was convinced. He was carrying with him a hatchet and a red handkerchief, and he said, *I am sorry that I have not any better gifts for you than this hatchet and this handkerchief, but before you leave, I want to show you something.* Then he placed his arm on a log, and with the hatchet he severed the hand from the arm. And then he picked up the hand and placed it back on the wrist and covered it with the red handkerchief, and when he took the handkerchief away again you could see that the hand was joined to the arm again. Then the old gentleman handed me the hatchet and the red handkerchief, and at that moment my spirit entered once more into my body and I found myself here in my own lodge with my relatives and friends standing all around."

539 The Chief continued:
798
789 From that time on, Yellow Wolf had the *Power.* One of his wives was named Pahták [Potato], and by her he had a son who was the father of the Yellow Wolf that is still living on this reservation today. One day this son asked to borrow Yellow Wolf's log chain, and Yellow Wolf told him that it was right there on the ground, covered with that black handkerchief. The son picked up the chain and it fell to pieces in his hands, but when Yellow Wolf picked up the links and covered them with the black handkerchief again, the chain was back together in one piece.

Another time, Chief Coward, who had the power to cut off his finger and then put it back on again, was showing off his power to Yellow Wolf. Yellow Wolf, who was chopping wood at the time, cut off his hand at the wrist and the hand fell three or four feet away from the arm and blood poured out of the arm. "See what you made me do!" Yellow Wolf said. "You startled me so much with your power that you made me go and cut off my own hand." But Yellow Wolf was only teasing Chief Coward, because when he picked up the hand and placed it against his wrist and covered it with his red handkerchief, the hand was joined to the arm again.

156 The Chief concluded the tale by saying that Yellow Wolf, who had lived to a ripe old age and had died only recently, had two daughters that were still living. Brother Jim added that actually

122 771 177 [787] [796] Christian dogma and his own spiritual inheritance. Joe told me of the time that a sixteen-year-old Indian girl had seen a vision of the Virgin Mary. The Virgin had asked the girl to sponsor a Sun Dance (an Indian religious ceremony) at a certain time and place, promising that Jesus would attend the ceremony. So the Sun Dance was held, and afterward, in solid rock, were found the footprints of Jesus, showing where he had stood during the ceremony.

122 764 Our religious discussion finally led into a discussion of Indian burials, and Joe Scabby Robe turned and pointed south, across the creek, to a high pine bluff about two miles away. "You see that pine bluff?" he said. "Just below the ridge, in that open place among the pines? You see that little house up there?"

Now that he had pointed it out, I could see the house quite clearly.

"That's an Indian burial house. That's where old Earrings is buried." And Joe told me that a long time ago, before there was a road across this part of the Reservation, a man named Earrings had been returning from the Agency with supplies when he lost his way in a blizzard and froze to death. He was buried, in the Blackfoot tradition, in a small house constructed especially for that purpose, [795] with his personal belongings left lying close about him in case he should need them in the other life.

I asked Joe whether it would be all right for me to visit the burial house, and he said sure. He even told me how to get there ("You could go that way there, or either go that other way").

122 796 Most of the Pipe Dance guests had arrived now, although an occasional late arriving car or truck would still appear. The house was overflowing with people, and numerous children (Indian children invariably go where their parents go) raced in and out and around the house and visited the outhouse in two's and three's. Joe Scabby Robe went off to find his wife, and I set out to locate the Chief, entering the house by way of the back door which led directly into the big kitchen. The kitchen was crowded with women and children. Mary Ground was there, stirring a huge cauldron which boiled and bubbled on the large woodstove. Also on the stove-top was a two-gallon granite coffeepot. To the right of the kitchen was a small room containing a bed upon which several small children napped. Beyond the kitchen was the main room of the house. I could see the Chief and most of the other men in there, but since this was obviously the room in which the Pipe Dance was to be performed, I did not feel free to enter alone and without invitation.

As I stood uncertainly there in the kitchen, feeling rather like the

122 764 withered, ustulate rib-cage. The floor of the burial house was an incredible litter of rags and papers and bones and a shoe or two. In the air was a faint sweetish smell.

None of the human remains here on the hill had a head, and this puzzled me until, turning from the doorway, I saw glinting in the sun nearby a shiny metal can with the word "COLA" lettered on the side. And then, of course, I knew that some tourist or some student of anthropology must have told quite a tale as he displayed the souvenirs that he had stolen, ghoul-like, from the burial place of human beings.

122 775 I did not remain very long at the burial house, and I did not go inside, and although I had brought two cameras I did not take any pictures. At first I had experienced nothing really unusual up here on the ridge, but now, as I angrily kicked the Cola can and stood in arms-akimbo embarrassment for my race, I began to sense the presence of something unearthly. I did not see anything; I did not hear anything but the wind; but I felt something—something that did not welcome my presence here. And suddenly I realized that although I could not say that I saw or heard anything, neither could I swear that I *did not* see or hear something. It was a very strange sensation, and one not entirely comforting. I wanted to be gone from this place, but with Anglo-Saxon stubbornness I forced myself instead to sit down under a pine tree and to look for a long minute at Starr School and at the pick-up truck which moved slowly down the road below, trailing close upon itself a thick, sciuroid tail of dust, I noticed that Sweetgrass Hill, far to the northeast, was not wearing a hat this afternoon.

If I were a smoker, I should have lighted a cigarette and smoked it very slowly. But I am not, so before rising to go I ostentatiously and with deliberate slowness untied and then re-tied my shoes. Then, instead of taking the trail back around the side of the ridge, I climbed to the very ridgetop. The top was bare of trees, and many years ago someone had piled there a large cairn of flat rocks—purple, pale green, pink, all the colors of the stones of Montana. The view from the cairn was magnificent, but I stayed for only a moment. After all, I had told nobody that I was coming up here. My car was hidden out of sight in the aspens behind the ridge. I was miles from the road. The fellows would worry about me. Besides, it was now mid-afternoon and I had not yet eaten lunch.

I started down the slope toward the aspen grove in which the station wagon was parked. The going was very steep, and I slipped a good deal. It was easier to go down fast, in sideways bounds.

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What if the car would not start! The Presence was still with me, and growing stronger—more angry. 122 795

I reached the car and started it and turned it around with no difficulty, and as I started back down the track, the Presence moved with me—not inside the car, but not outside, either. But it was there. I felt it, and I felt a chill move like a cold quick centipede up my back, and still I did not see or hear a thing. And then suddenly I smelled the thick pungent odor of burning sweetgrass—smelled it unmistakably and very strong, but only for a moment. Then it was gone.

I was driving faster now, still among the hills, and then again came a brief but thick and undeniable fragrance: tobacco smoke—the smoke of a strong cigar, I thought. Then the smoke was gone, but not so the Presence. The Presence was there and the Presence was very strong, and in the heat of the day I felt the gooseflesh rise. Then once again the brief strong waft of tobacco smoke. Very real! And then nothing. I had reached the prairie now, and as the final whiff of smoke faded away, the Presence faded too—not all at once, but gradually, fading back to the hills.

No cows barred the track on the way across the prairie to the road, and when the cattle gate had been raised again behind the station wagon, I turned left on Starr School Road and drove slowly back to the ranch. In passing by Jim White Grass' house, I looked left across the creek to the pine ridge beyond. Yes, there really was a burial house up there.

The Chief was asleep on the sofa and Jim was absent. On the cardboard from my morning's clean shirt, a note was written in large script: 122

> Dick we couldn't found you around town
> I thought you went home. I went after
> wood be back this evening.
>
> Jim

There is your "lazy Indian" for you. When Jim got his truck back he went for wood not later on, not tomorrow morning, not when the Social Security check comes in, but *right now.*

I was really hungry, and I ate the boiled elk and boiled potatoes that Jim had left on the table and also downed three sandwiches of peanut butter and honey.

The Chief woke up shortly after I finished eating, and although I was very anxious to have his reaction to my experiences at the

White Man to elevate the Blackfoot Indian even unto the artful employment of profanity and imprecation. And even when a Blackfoot is cussing a veritable English blue streak, chances are that he does not, even today, understand the traditional implications of the *náh-pi-quon* phrases he is using; more than likely he believes that he is employing terms of strong emphasis, nothing more. 195 177

About the worst thing you can call someone in Blackfoot is *i-mi-dés-ki* (dog face), and since this is a term the Blackfoots formerly used in reference to the White soldier (because of his moustache?), Blackfoot may well be the origin of that term as now universally applied to the American infantryman. [578]

The only home-grown expletive I have ever heard the Chief use is, *"I-mi-táu-chi-kahnl"*—a word which he employs with purely humorous connotation and which could perhaps best be translated as referring to the vernacular portion of a dog. 195

I told the Chief about my experiences up on the pine ridge (Jimmy translating) and the Chief considered it all unremarkable enough; however, he could not explain my having smelled cigar smoke. (Cigar is a word that the Blackfoots got from the Whites. The Blackfoot *tsi-kái-yeh* is quite obviously the French *cigarre* expressed in Blackfoot phonemes. Another Blackfoot word for cigar, which Jim usually but not always pronounces, *Bo-tsip-stahk-kan*, translates as "all tobacco.") 122

Jim explained that the Blackfoot word for ghost is *stúh-aw* and that the burial house on the ridge is referred to by the Indians as the "ghost house." The Chief was surprised to learn that someone had made off with Earrings' head, because this is definitely a recent occurrence, but I learned that grave-robbing is nothing new to the Reservation. The traditional Blackfoot method of burial was the scaffold or tree burial (chiefs and men of prominence were sometimes left at rest in a teepee high on some hill or ridge), and the Chief explained the reason that the burial house came into existence among his people. The Blackfoots left the earthly remains of their departed loved-ones wrapped in a robe and tied to a scaffold which was placed either in a tree (usually by a stream or on a bluff above a stream) or atop a cairn of flat stones. The Blackfoots believed that when the body had served its earthly purpose of transporting through life the spirit of an individual, the body should return to the earth and so nourish the earth to the creation of new life (this is certainly a philosophy much more beautiful than the White Man's encasing the dead body in a vault in order to "protect" it from any possibility of its renewing the soil which had given it birth). But the 122 764 [795] 764 [774] [812] [177]

764 White Man, who considered the Indian burial scaffold to be "in-
177 decent" and "unsightly," not only forbade the Blackfoots the privi-
lege of burial according to the Blackfoot belief but actually went
about tearing down those burial scaffolds which already existed. So
• [775] the Blackfoot, understandably reluctant to inter his loved-one in a
closed grave from which, according to Indian belief, the soul could
not escape, secretly began to construct small burial houses which he
hoped would pass in the White Man's observation as ordinary places
of residence. This worked all right for a while, and at one time
there were many burial houses on the Reservation—the Chief's father
was placed in a small house atop a large, barren hill just to the
southeast of Starr School—but during the 1930's the W.P.A. was sent
onto the Reservation to "improve and beautify" the land and the
bastards tore down every burial house they could find. They were
supposed to give the remains decent burial, but in most instances
they were too lazy to do this and after pocketing whatever valuables
had been placed in the burial house along with the deceased, they
tore the place down and scattered the remains like so much garbage
(little did they know that the Indians preferred this to burial).
But the Indians did *not* prefer that the W.P.A. workers steal the
skulls and trade them to saloonkeepers for drinks. One saloon in Cut
Bank, a town just across the Reservation line, had a collection of
such Indian skulls lined up behind the bar until, I am gratified to
report, decent persons of both races forced their removal.

Earrings' burial place apparently was protected by its very re-
moteness and difficulty of access, and so far as I have been able to
learn it is the only "ghost house" left in this part of the Reservation.
165 The Chief remembers Earrings very well, and with his impeccable
honesty he told me the true tale of how Earrings bit the dust. It
happened about fifty years ago, in the fall of the year during an un-
seasonable cold spell such as the one we have been having lately.
Earrings was coming from town all right, and although he was car-
rying supplies he was also carrying a plentiful supply of extract—
most of it inside himself—and he got drunk and passed out and froze
to death. An empty extract can was lying nearby when they found
him. (I'll bet he was the drunk sonofagun that chased me down the
[764] hill.) The Chief does not know the identities of Earrings' grave-
mates, and he did not know that they were there in the ghost house.
[I was later able to identify them as certain of Earrings' relatives.]

114 The conversation dwelt throughout the evening on Blackfoot
764 religious beliefs in general and on Blackfoot burial customs in par-
ticular. The Chief informed me that Schultz was buried by the

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Blackfoots, at his own request, in the Indian manner. This was undoubtedly James Willard Schultz, a fur trader during the latter portion of the nineteenth century who lived from time to time among the Blackfoots and who wrote some three dozen books of varied worth about the Plains Indians. He was buried down at Two Medicine, next to a Blackfoot chief named Red Eagle.

During the course of our discussion, the Chief told once again about the belief of the Blackfoot Indian that after death his spirit resides in the Sand Hills (Jimmy translates it as "Big Sandy"), a rather desolate region in the Province of Saskatchewan. The Chief says that you can track the spirits in the Sand Hills, but that at the end of each set of tracks you always find the same thing—a dead mouse. If this belief isn't enough to jar even the most smug *Náhpiquon* amongst us, it certainly should be because it strikes pretty close to home. No matter what kind of tracks you make through this world, Buster—barefoot, moccasin, wagon track or Cadillac—when you go you can't take any more with you than the humblest mouse that ever got caught in a five-cent trap. I can already visualize a story based on this concept. Title: "The Trail of the Mouse."

It is late now, and the Chief does not feel at all well. Jim and I are sitting up with him. I am typing, and Jim is lamenting the fact that he has only a fourth grade education. He is aware that Indians should learn to make better preparation for the future.

Just read over the part about my feeling the Presence as I came down from the burial house. It is difficult not to dramatize an experience such as this, but I have sincerely attempted not to. I have tried to record what happened—what I felt and thought—as objectively as possible, for to do otherwise would be to cheat myself. When an experience is set down on paper, the written description of the experience becomes, in time, the experience itself; consequently, to distort in any way the written record of an experience is to cast away irretrievably a portion of one's life. This fact was impressed upon me very strongly on the occasion of our recent visit to Heart Butte. The Heart Butte racetrack had provided the setting for my story, "Horserace," and I had passed an entire afternoon at the Heart Butte track and I had thought that I knew the place in its every detail and that I could never forget it. But when finally I went there again, I went as a total stranger. Nothing was familiar. It had been necessary in my writing to alter certain details of the scene in order to meet the symbolic demands of the story, and I found myself now searching not for those features of terrain which